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THE ANCIENT AND PRESENT STATE OF POLAND.

GIVING

A ſhort, but exact, Account of the Scituation of that Country. The Manners and Cuſtoms of the Inhabitants. The ſeveral Succeſſions of their Kings. Their Religion, &c.

Drawn out of their beſt Hiſtorians.

To which is added,

An I[illegible] our [illegible] the [illegible]th of the late Ki[illegible] of [illegible] Electi[illegible] as it now ſtands.

LONDON,

P[illegible] for *E[illegible] Whitlock*, near *Stationers-Hall*, 1697.

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TO THE

READER.

THE Affairs of Poland *being, at this juncture, the common Subject of our Diſcourſes and Expectations, upon the happy Determining whereof, 'tis thought, the future Peace, Quiet and Proſperity, of* Europe *will, in a great meaſure, depend; The following Account may perhaps be acceptable to the Publick. It treats firſt in general of* POLAND, *how Bounded and Divided. Afterwards of the Nature of the Country, and Manners of the People, the Election of their Kings, their Government, and their Religion. Theſe are the principal Heads upon which we make our Enquiries of any Country and People. They are handled ſo briefly and ſuccinctly,*

as not to be tedious to the Reader, yet, 'tis hoped, to his Satisfaction. There is added an Account of the Death of the late King, and of the present Election, as it now stands.

THE

THE Ancient and Present State OF POLAND, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of Poland.

Poland is an Elective Monarchy, comprehending the Antient *Sarmatia Europæa*, and the Eastern part of *Germany*, towards the *Vistula*. It is called by the Natives *Polska*, and has taken its Name from the Word *Pole*, or *Pola*; which, in the *Sclavonian* Language, signifie, an Hunting Country; all this State consisting of vast Plains, Fields and Woods, proper for Hunting. It is much greater, and more considerable than it was, since *Lithuania*, and several other Provinces, have been added: For before it only contain'd what we now call the *Great*, and the *Lesser Poland*: But with these Additions, 'tis one of the greatest Kingdoms in *Europe*. *Moscovy* and *Tartary* lie to the East; *Hungary*, *Transilvania* and *Moldavia* to the South; *Germany* to the West; and the *Baltick* Sea, *Livonia*, and a part of *White Russia*, or *Moscovy*, to the North. This State may be divided into *the Kingdom of* Poland, and *the Great Dutchy of* Lithuania. *The Kingdom of* Poland is subdivided into *Great* and *Lesser Poland*: The *Lesser Poland* lies

betwixt *Hungary*, *Sileſia* and *Ruſſia*: In it is *Cracow*, the Capital City of all the Kingdom, and *Sandomirz*. *Great Poland* is betwixt *Germany*, *Pomerania*, *Sileſia* and the *Leſſer Poland*; and has the Cities of *Poſnan*, *Kaliſch*, *Gneſna*, *Lencici*, *Lublin* and *Sirad*: It contains alſo the Provinces of *Mazovia*, where is *Warſaw* and *Plocsko*; *Cujavia*, where is *Uladiſlaw*; *Royal Pruſſia*, which has *Dantzick*, *Elbing*, *Thorn*, *&c.* and *Black Ruſſia*, with the Cities of *Leopold*, and *Prezmiſle*, in Latin *Premiſlia*. *Lithuania* has in it the Cities of *Vilna*, *Novogrode*, *Poloczk*, *Minx*, *Wiſepezk*, *Miciſlaw*, *Breſlaw*, *&c.* and is divided into *Volhinia*, with the Cities of *Lucho*, *Kiow*, *&c.* *Podolia*, with the Cities of *Caminiec*, *Braclaw*, *&c.* *Poleſia*, where is *Breſſici*; and *Samogitia*, the Capital of which is *Medniki*. *Poland* is otherwiſe divided into Thirty four *Palatinates*, or Governments: Every *Palatine* has his *Chaſtellans* under him, and they are Captains and Governors of Cities, and are about Eighty ſeven in all. There may be an Eccleſiaſtical Diviſion of *Poland*, according to their two Archbiſhopricks of *Gneſna* and *Leopold*. They had formerly *Riga* too, but that City is now in poſſeſſion of the *Suedes*. The Archbiſhop of *Gneſna* is the Firſt Senator; he aſcends the Throne upon the King's Death, and governs till another is choſe. There are Fifteen Biſhopricks in *Poland*, many Abbies, and the Univerſities of *Cracow*, *Royaumont*, *Coningsberg*, *Zamoiski*, *&c.*

CHAP. II.

Of the Country of Poland.

THE Air of *Poland* is very pure; and the Land ſo good, that it is almoſt impoſſible to conceive the Quantity of Corn they ſend to other Countries. There are vaſt Plains, as far as you can ſee, intermix'd with Rivers, and many Woods; which are to the Advantage, as well as Beauty, of the Country. This chiefly concerns *Great Poland*: The *Leſſer* is as fruitful, though not ſo compact: In it are Mines of Silver and Iron, and Vines, and excellent Fruits. With theſe Advantages, they likewiſe enjoy a temperate Air,

Air. But it is not ſo in *Lithuania*: The Commodities in which they trade, are, Honey, Wax, Veniſon, Fiſh, Timber, Hemp, Corn, the Skins of Martins, Caſtors, Bears, Elkes, and other Wild Beaſts; as alſo Copper, Lead, Iron, and chiefly Steel.

The Nobility only are conſiderable in *Poland*: The Third Eſtate are, in a manner, Slaves. The Gentlemen of *Poland* are large, and ſtrong; dexterouſly wield the Scimitar; Learned in Foreign Languages; very liberal, brave Men; and hearty *Roman Catholicks*. But it muſt farther be own'd, that they are fierce, and proud; that they ſacrifice every thing to their own Opinions; and own no Sovereign, but Liberty. From hence have come thoſe Advantages the *Tartars* and *Moſcovites* have had formerly againſt them; and the Reaſons why the King of *Sweden*, with about Forty Thouſand Men, reduced their Country to the laſt Extremity, when their Armies conſiſted of Two Hundred Thouſand Fighting Men: Which could proceed from no other Cauſe, than a Miſ-underſtang among themſelves, and the little Power they give their Prince: Inſomuch, that before the Senate can be aſſembled, and the Nobility have reſolved to go to War, the Enemy has Time to do what he will in the Field; and there are no ſtrong Places to hinder his going to the Gates of *Warſaw*. However, the *Polanders* are good Soldiers, eſpecially the Horſe, who are armed with a Carabine, a Caſe of Piſtols, an Axe on one ſide, and Scymitar on the other, a Quiver full of Arrows and a Bow at their Backs, which they uſe after the the Diſcharge of their Fire-Arms, when the Enemy flyes. The *Polanders* love Travelling; they are faithful, obliging, and civil to Strangers: They are rich in their Habits, and ſplendid in their Entertainments, which they make freely for their Friends.

Their Marriages, eſpecially in the Countries of *Pruſſia*, *Samogittia* and *Lithuania*, are as follows; The Young Women do not marry before the Age of Twenty four Years; or, at leaſt, not before they have wrought with their own Hands Cloth and Garments to preſent every one that attends their Bridegroom to Church. When the Father ſeeks a Wife for his Son, he conſiders neither Beauty, nor Fortune; but only her Manners, whether ſhe be of an agreeable Age, if ſhe has a Body likely to conceive and bear Children. Having found ſuch an one, ſhe is taken away by ſome of the Bridegroom's Kindred; after which, they apply for the Father's Conſent, to compleat the Marriage. Theſe People retain ſtill many Relicks of *Pagan* Superſtitions; for, in the

Functions.

Functions or Ceremonies of Matrimony, they make the Bride go three times round the Fire, then ſit down, waſh her Feet, and with that Water ſprinkle the Bed and all the Moveables that belong to the New-married Couple. They anoint the Bride's Mouth with Honey, cover her Eyes with a Veil, and ſo lead her Blindfold to all the Doors of the Houſe, which ſhe muſt ſtrike with her Right Foot. They throw Wheat, Rye, Oats, Barley, Rice and Beans at the Doors, ſaying, "That the Bride ſhall never want any of "thoſe Grains if ſhe continues devout in her Religion, and takes "Care of the Affairs of the Family." That done, they take the Veil from before her Eyes, and have a Banquet; But at Night, when it is time to go to Bed, they dance, and cut off her Hair; then ſome of the Women wrap her Head in a white Linen Cloth, which ſhe may wear till ſhe have a Son born, for till then ſhe is called a Girl. Laſtly, She is taken to her Chamber; where, after being jocularly pinched and beaten, they deliver her to her Bridegroom, who they give to eat Goat or Bears Stones together, inſtead of Sweet-meats and other Delicacies; which, they are of Opinion, help Procreation; and therefore, in their Marriage-Feaſts, they have no Fleſh of any Creature that was gelt.

They uſe in their Diet, a good quantity of Saffron and Spices; and ſpare not for Sugar in many Diſhes peculiar to them.

The *Polanders* are very devout, and faſt *Wedneſdays*, *Fridays* and *Saturdays*; but they ſcruple not being drunk, and to fight at theſe times. The Country-People are poor and miſerable, and are Maſters of nothing they have, but are ſubject to their Lords, who treat them as Tyrannically as Gally-Slaves. A Gentleman there has Power of Life and Death over thoſe of his Family, and Tenants: And if a Neighbour kills one, and pays the Value ſet upon him, all is well again: And when they ſpeak of a Gentleman's Riches, they reckon them by his Number of Tenants. The Houſes of theſe miſerable Slaves, who work hard, and live upon little, are only of Mud and ſome Trees to hold up the Roof. The Children ſleep and eat with the Swine; and the Maſter of the Houſe has no other place to eat in, and oftentimes for his Lodging, than the Manger and Rack where his Cattel are kept. 'Tis true, there is ſometimes a little Apartment next the Roof, where they have a Stove, and the beſt of the Family lie upon Skins. They drink Beer, or Mead, but no Water, becauſe 'tis almoſt all ſtinking in *Poland*, where it corrupts in the Plains. Their Women are little, not handſom, very ſimple,

but

but civil: The *Polanders* love them, but treat them like Servants; and when they return home from the Army, they give them their Right Hands to kiſs. They are ſomething jealous, and therefore have no Converſation, but with their next Relations, unleſs when they are at Balls and Feaſts. They go very ſeldom abroad.

There are no Inns in *Poland*, upon the Road; and therefore, Gentlemen that travel, either lodge with their Friends, or carry their own Proviſions along with them, or elſe lie upon the Country-People, who are obliged to receive them, and that as a Tax upon them. If any of the Nobility are taken in War, the King is obliged to ranſom him. Their Language is *Sclavonian*; beſides that, they all ſpeak Latin, and moſt of them underſtand Foreign Languages.

CHAP. III.

Of the Kings of Poland.

IT is commonly thought the *Huns* were the firſt People that came into *Poland*; and the *Sclavonians*, who drove thence the *Suedes* and *Goths*, and ſome others that inhabited from the *Viſtula*, to the *Elbe*. *Lechus* made himſelf Maſter of it about the Year 550, and began the Monarchy of *Poland*. This Prince reſided at *Gneſna*, a City which he built, and ſo named from an Eagle's Neſt that was found on the top of a Tree where it was building; the Word, in the *Poliſh* Language, ſignifying *a Neſt*: Whence came the Arms of the Kingdom to be a Spread-Eagle.

The firſt Governors of this Country did not aſſume to themſelves the Title of Kings, but only that of Dukes; and the firſt Form of Government was very inconſtant; for, after the Race of *Lechus*, (though it be uncertain how many there were, and how long they govern'd, and what were their Atchievments,) Twelve Governors (in their Language called *Vayvods*) adminiſter'd the Government; who having refin'd this barbarous People by good Laws and Conſtitutions, at laſt were divided among themſelves. Whereupon, the *Poles* elected one *Cracus*; who having reſtor'd the Common-

wealth to its former State, built the City of *Cracovia*, (now *Cracow*,) calling it after his own Name, and making it his Place of Reſidence. His youngeſt Son, *Lechus* the Second, to obtain the Principality, Murther'd his eldeſt Brother; but the Fact being diſcover'd, he was baniſh'd. To him ſucceeded *Venda*, a Virgin, only Child of *Cracus*. After her Death, the Government return'd to *Vayvods*; which continued till the *Poles* elected *Premiſlus*, a Gold-Smith, called alſo *Leſcus* the Firſt; who obtain'd the Crown by a Stratagem that ſav'd the *Poles* when they were in diſtreſs; the Manner of which was thus; "They being in the Field, againſt "the *Moravians*, and finding themſelves much inferiour in Num-"ber, this Goldſmith bethought himſelf of a Way to make the "*Poliſh* Army ſeem more numerous; which was, by making a "great Number of Shields of Barks of Trees, and afterwards "ſmeering them over with Galls and Quick-Silver; which ma-"king a great Shew, and the *Moravians* really believing the *Poles* "were equal in Number, ſtood gazing upon the Shields, till the "*Poliſh* Army had Time to retire."

This Duke having no Iſſue, an Horſe-Race was inſtituted, to determine the Succeſſion; and three Candidates appearing, one of them thinking by Subtilty to obtain the Crown, laid ſeveral Iron Spikes in the Way where the Race was to be run; which the the other two knowing nothing of, they gall'd, and ſtop'd in their Career, ſo that the Politician came firſt to the Goal: But the Falacy being ſoon detected, a poor Country Fellow, that ran along with them, on Foot, only for his Diverſion, was choſen, and the other kill'd upon the Spot.

This Duke's Name was *Leſcus* the Second; and who (as ſome ſay) was afterwards ſlain in the Wars againſt *Charles the Great*.

To him ſucceeded his Son, *Leſcus* the Third; who having appeas'd *Charles the Great* with Preſents, made Peace with him, either as an unequal Ally, or by acknowledging himſelf his Vaſſal. This Duke left *Poland* to his Son *Popiel*; but gave the neighbouring Countries of *Pomerania* and *Caſſovia* to his Natural Children.

After him, ſucceeded his Son, *Popiell* the Second; a very ill Man; who, by the Perſuaſions of his Lady, murther'd his Father's Brothers: Whereupon, 'tis reported, that out of their dead Bodies (which he would not ſuffer to be interr'd) came forth a great Number of huge Rats, which devour'd him, and his whole Family;

mily, notwithſtanding all imaginable means were uſed to prevent it.

After his Death, came an *Inter-regnum*, full of Troubles, till the *Poles* declar'd *Piaſtus*, a Country-Fellow, born at *Cruſwitz*, for their Prince; from whom, ever after, if any of the Natives obtained the Royal Dignity, they were call'd *Piaſti*. His Poſterity reign'd for a long time in *Poland*; from whom alſo deſcended the Dukes of *Lignitz* and *Brieg*, in *Sileſia*. 'Tis ſaid, this Duke was One Hundred and Twenty Years old when he died.

His Son *Zigmovitus* was a brave and Warlike Prince; to whom ſucceeded his Son

Leſcus the Fourth; of a peaceable Temper.

Of much the ſame was his Son *Zickmoviſtus*, who ſucceeded him. This Prince had but one Son, who being born blind, was, in the Seventh Year of his Age, (in which Year, according to the Cuſtom of thoſe Times, his Head was to be ſhav'd, and he to receive his Name,) reſtor'd to his Sight; which was then taken for an Omen, that he ſhould be enlighten'd with the Chriſtian Faith. His Name was *Miciſlaus*, or *Miſcho*; who began his Reign in 964. and was the firſt Chriſtian Duke of *Poland*.

Boleſlaus Chrobry, his Son, ſucceeded him in 999, and was created King by the Emperor *Otho* the Third, who viſited the Tomb of St. *Adelbert*, kill'd in *Pruſſia*.

He left the Crown to *Miciſlaus* the Second:

Who likewiſe left it to *Caſimir*; who being an Infant, his Mother *Rixa* took upon her the Adminiſtration of the Government; but the *Poles* being diſ-ſatisfied with her, ſhe was forc'd to flee, with her Son, into *Germany*, who, in his Journey afterwards to *France*, aſſum'd the Order and Habit of a Monk. During his Abſence there were great Diſturbances in *Poland*; whereupon, by the Mediation of the Pope, the *Poles* prevail'd upon *Caſimir* to leave his Monaſtery, and to accept of the Crown; but upon this Condition, That they were yearly to contribute a Farthing for each Head, except thoſe of the Nobility and Clergy, towards the maintaining a perpetual Burning Lamp in the Church of St. *Peter*'s at *Rome*; and moreover, cauſe their Heads to be ſhaved about their Ears, like Monks.

His Son, *Boleſlaus* the Second, ſucceeded him. This Prince, ſurnam'd *The Cruel*, put to death *Staniſlaus*, Biſhop of *Cracow*; and,

as a Puniſhment for his Crimes, *Poland* loſt the Title of King for a conſiderable Time.

The next King was *Uladiſlaus* the Firſt, Brother to the fore-going *Boleſlaus*.

He was ſucceeded by his Son *Boleſlaus* the Third, a brave Soldier, who obtain'd a ſignal Victory over the Emperor *Henry* the Fifth, in the *Dogs Field*, near *Breſlau*. There never was a Prince in *Poland* more famous than this; he fought 45 Battels with Succeſs, except the laſt with the *Red Ruſſians*, which was loſt through the Cowardice of the *Vayvod* of *Cracovia*; to whom the King, for Recompence, ſent a Hare's Skin and a Spinning-Wheel; which ſo troubl'd him, that he hang'd himſelf: And the King likewiſe was ſo concern'd at his Defeat, that he not long after died with Grief.

His Son *Uladiſlaus* the Second ſucceeded him.

After whom came *Boleſlaus Criſpus*, his Brother; who receiv'd a great Overthrow from the *Pruſſians*, his Army having been miſ-lead into Moors and Bogs, through the Treachery of a Guide.

Next ſucceeded his Brother *Miciſlaus Senior*; but he was ſoon depoſed for Male-Adminiſtration.

Then came his Brother, *Caſimir* the Second, to be elected; who was only famous for chaſtiſing the *Pruſſians*.

His Son *Leſcus* the Fifth, Sur-nam'd *The White*, was fain to contend with the baniſh'd *Miciſlaus* for the Kingdom.

Next him, came his Son *Boleſlaus* the Fifth, Sur-nam'd *The Chaſte*; in whoſe Reign the *Tartars* committed prodigious Barbarities in *Poland*, and from thence made an Inroad into *Sileſia*, where, in a Battel fought near *Lignitz*, they ſlew ſo many of the Inhabitants, that they fill'd nine great Sacks with their Ears, though they did cut off but one from each Head.

To him ſucceeded his Couſin *Leſcus*, Sur-nam'd *The Black*, who was very fortunate in his Wars; though the Civil Commotions, and frequent Incurſions of the *Tartars*, occaſion'd great Diſturbances in his Kingdom.

After his Death, there were great Conteſts about the Regency; till at laſt, *Premiſlaus*, Lord of *Great Poland*, got the Upper Hand, aſſuming the Title of King, which had not been uſed for near Two Hundred Years before. This Prince was murther'd by ſome *Brandenburgh* Emiſſaries, after he had reign'd but Seven Months.

Next to him, was elected *Uladiſlaus Lecticus*, who was depos'd for Male-Adminiſtration.

Then

Then came *Wenceſlaus*, King of *Bohemia*, to be choſen; but after his Death, *Lacticus* was reſtor'd.

After him, his Son *Caſimir the Great* ſucceeded; who ſubdu'd all *Ruſſia*, and united it to the Kingdom of *Poland*. He dying, the Male Race of *Piaſtus* loſt the Crown of *Poland*, which, after this *Caſimir*, devolv'd to *Lewis*, King of *Hungary*, who left two Daughters.

Hedwigis, the youngeſt of which, was declared Queen, and married *Jagello*, Duke of *Lithuania*, who was then Baptized, and made a Chriſtian. Upon this Marriage he was Acknowledged, and his Countries joined to *Poland* about the year 1386. *Jagello*, who took at his Baptiſm the Name of *Uladiſlaus* the 4th. had for his Succeſſor *Uladiſlaus* the 5th. This King was killed in a Battle againſt the *Turks*; in his ſtead *Caſimir* the 4th. was made King of *Poland*, to whom Succeeded his Son *John Albert*; after whom came his Brother *Alexander*, who Reigned only five Years, when came *Sigiſmund* the Firſt, one of the moſt famous Princes in his time; his Son *Sigiſmund* the 2d. was next Elected, who died without Iſſue, and thereby the Male Race of the *Jagellonick* Family was Extinct.

Then the *Polanders* choſe *Henry*, Duke of *Anjou*, Son of *Henry* the 2d. of *France*, King, and he was Crowned the 15th. of *Feb.* 1574. But this Prince having Notice of the Death of his Brother, *Charles* the Ninth, King of *France*, he went to receive that Crown in 1576.

Then one Party of the Electors ſet up *Stephen Batori*, Prince of *Tranſilvania*; and the other, *Maximilian*, Arch-Duke of *Auſtria*; which brought a War upon the Country. The Firſt carried it, and died without Childrin, in 1580.

Next *Sigiſmund* the Third, Son to *John*, King of *Sweden*, was ſet upon the Throne in 1587, but the King, his Father, dying ſoon after, he went to take poſſeſſion of the Crown of *Sweden*. Some time afterwards the *Swedes* revolted, and choſe *Charles*, Prince of *Sudermania*, his Uncle, for their King. They went to War with *Sigiſmund*, took *Riga* from him in 1625, and he died in 163[illegible]. *Uladiſlaus*, his Son, ſucceeded him, who dying in 1648, they choſe in his place *John Caſimir*; he made a voluntary Abdication of the Crown, and had for his Succeſſor *Michael VVitznowizki*, that died in 1672, and *John Sobieski* ſucceeded him, and died in 1696. This Prince was the Third of that Name; he was the youngeſt

Son

Son of *Sobieski*, Palatin of *Cracovia*, *&c.* and of a Daughter of *Staniſlaus Zolkiewski*, Grand Chancellor, and Grand General of the Crown. He was made Grand Marſhal of the Crown, *Auguſt* 24*th.* 1665, and Grand Maſter of the King's Houſhold, Palatin of *Cracovia*, *&c.* He recovered 60 Towns from the rebellious *Coſacks* in the *Ukrain* in 1667, he held out *Podhois* againſt the *Tartars*, and two years after he took from them and the *Coſſacks* all the Palatinate of *Bracklaw*, in the *Lower Podolia*. He defeated the *Turks* in 1671, during the ſiege of *Leopold*, upon the *Peltaw*, in the *Black Ruſſia*, and in 1673 won the famous Battle of *Cherzim*, upon the *Neiſter*, upon the Frontiers of *Moldavia*: That Battle begun upon a *Saturday*, and was not fully over till within three days after, at what time it was ended by the Surrender of that that Fortreſs. The *Turks* in that Battle loſt 8000 *Janiſaries*, and 2000 *Spahi's*, which being one of the moſt celebrated Victories in this Age, was gained upon the 11th. of *Nov.* the next day after the deceaſe of King *Michael Korilut Wiesnowiski*. The Grand Marſhal *Sobieski* was Elected, *May* 10. 1674, but was not Crowned till fifteen Months after, during which time he gained ſeveral Advantages over the *Turks*, and conſtrained them to make a Peace at *Zurowna*. Every one knows how much he contributed towards the Raiſing the Siege of *Viena*, being himſelf in Perſon at the Action, wherein he acquired great Renown. He eſpouſed *Mary de la Grange*, the Daughter of the Marquiſs *d' Arquien*, not long ſince made a Cardinal, of the Noble Family of *de la Grange* in *Nivernois*; ſhe was the Widow of Prince *Zamoiski*. The King had ſeveral Children by her, and among the reſt three Princes, of which the Eldeſt has the Honour to be Brother-in-Law to the Emperor, by Marrying one of the Princeſſes of *Neuburgs*: Laſtly, to compleat his Encomium, he ſpoke ſeveral Languages, and was a great Lover of Books, and Learned Men.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Government, and Manner of Election in Poland.

Poland is a State where the Government is Monarchical, and Ariſtocratical. It is Monarchical, becauſe they have a King; and Ariſtocratical, by reaſon their King is not an Abſolute Prince, that can Diſpoſe and Reſolve upon Affairs by his own Power without Conſent of the Senators. I have already taken Notice, that the Archbiſhop of *Gneſna* is Primate of the Kingdom, and has the Adminiſtration, during an *Inter-regnum*. He Aſſembles the States to Elect a new King, and Appoints both Time and Place. After every one has given his Suffrage, the King is Elected by Majority of Voices. This Prelate declares him, brings him forth into the middle of the Aſſembly, then he is Conducted to the Church, where, after Maſs, he Swears to preſerve the Privileges of the Kingdom, and to keep the Eſtabliſhed Laws, which oblige him to do nothing without Conſent of the States. Upon Matters of moment the King ſends, by his Chancellor, Letters to the Palatins, called *Inſtructionis Litteræ*, becauſe they mention the State of thoſe Affairs his Majeſty has to propoſe to the Aſſembly, and Appoints them a Time to come to Court: When they receive theſe Letters, every one of the Senators particularly examines the Nature, Quality, Subject and Conſequences of the Propoſitions, to which he has a Liberty to Anſwer as he ſhall think fitting, whether with reſpect to the publick Good, or his own private Intereſt. The King ſends Letters alſo into the *Palatinates*, where the Nobility aſſemble to chooſe one among them, a Perſon of Merit, that is ſufficient and capable to ſpeak in behalf of their Province, in whom they are univerſally to agree to: For if it happens there be one Negative in the Aſſembly, 'tis impoſſible to proceed farther, the Deputy cannot go, and that Province has no Voice in the States. After theſe Provincial Aſſemblies are over, the Senators and Deputies appear at Court at the Time prefixed, where the King, attended by his Chancellor, ſignifies to them firſt the Cauſe of their Meeting, then hears and receives their Advices, but they

they muſt be unanimous in their Reſolutions, or, as they ſay, *Nemine reclamante, nemine diſſentiente*, or the Diet breaks up, every one goes home again, and the Propoſitions come to nothing. Among the Cities, there are only *Cracow*, *Danzic* and *Vilna* that have the Privilege of ſending Deputies to the Diet. The ordinary Matters are Tranſacted before the Judges eſtabliſhed in every *Palatinate*, and, as in the Provincial Aſſemblies, all manner of Perſons have Liberty to be preſent, and hear what is propoſed, the meaneſt Country-man may know all. So when ever they Treat of War, the Enemy is adviſed and informed of their Deſigns, their Strength, and how to ruine them. The King's beſt Revenue conſiſts in the Salt-works near *Cracow*, in the Mines of Copper, Lead and Silver, in the Fiſhery, and Tribute of the Jews, His Revenues are computed at 600000 Crowns *per Ann.* The Profit ariſing from his Demeſnes are commonly given away in Penſions and Bounties, to the Palatines, Chaſtellains, and other Great Men, to engage them to his Intereſts. Moſt of what comes into his own Coffers, is either laid up, or Expended in the Purchaſe of Eſtates for his younger Sons; his Daughters being Married at the Publick Charge; and the Expences of his Houſhold defrayed by his Subjects.

He has the Nomination of the Biſhopricks, and of all the Dignities of the Kingdom, and of the Commiſſions of War and Revenue, the Courts of Juſtice, and Civil Government. The chiefeſt Dignities are the Lieutenant, the Great Maſter of the King's Houſhold, the Great Treaſurer, the Great Provoſt, *&c.* Theſe Places are both for the Kingdom of *Poland*, and Dutchy of *Lithuania*, where the King goes every two or three Years to hold a Diet; and as ſoon as he enters upon the Country, he is only ſerved by the Officers of the Dutchy. The Grand Marſhal of the Crown, or Crown General, has very great Advantages, and his Office gives him the Title alſo of Grand Maſter of the King's Houſe, Great Maſter of the Ceremonies, Introductor of Ambaſſadors, Judge and Maſter of the Civil Government; he can make Laws, and has Power of Life and Death in him. The Generals of *this Kingdom*, and of *Lithuania*, may fight as they ſee Cauſe, and have Soveraign Power in the Camp. Beſides the Palatines and Chaſtellans that I have ſpoke of, there are in all the Cities, Burghers, Judges and Magiſtrates. But there lies an Appeal from them to *Cracow* for *Great Poland*, and to *Lublin* for the *Leſſer Poland* and *Ruſſia*.

Tho'

Tho' the King of *Poland* has the name of a King and the first Dukes were in truth Kings without the Title; yet at present he is nothing less, being not allowed to make Peace or War, to impose Taxes, make Laws, alienate any of his Demesnes, or in short, to do any thing of importance which concerns the Publick, without the consent of the Diet. And he does not only swear to do all this, but allows their Disobedience, in case he violates his Oath, which makes the Subjects the Princes Judges, and this Kingdom a meer Aristocracy, or knot of petty Kingdoms under one Head.

The First Dukes indeed were absolute Princes, and ruled after a Despotical manner, having power not only of the Estates of their Subjects, but of Life and Death without formalities of Law; yet when they once became Elective they lost much of that power, which decayed so by degrees, that at last it came to nothing, *magni nominis umbra.* A Diminution which began first in the times of *Lewis* of *Hungary*, and *Jagello of Lithuania*, who to gain the succession to the Kingdom contrary to Law, the one for his Daughter, the other for his Son, parted with many of their Royalties and Prerogatives to buy the Voices of the Nobility. Since which time the Nobility in all their Elections have limited and restrained the Kings Authority, and enlarged their own. Yet the King once chosen and enthroned hath sole Power in many things, as in assembling the Diets, chooling Peculiar Councellors, disposing absolutely of his Vassals and the Revenues of the Crown, to what use he pleaseth. He also is sole Judge of the Nobility in criminal Causes, which is a strong Bridle upon them. By which, and either joyning with the Clergy, or well forming his party among the Nobility, he may do many things not strictly legal; the power and influence he hath in the publick Government being in proportion to his Abilities and Dexterity in managing them.

The Forces of this Kingdom consist most in Horse, whereof they are able to raise 160000. Their Infantry are generally *German* or *Hungarians*, whom they hire for mony, and are like other mercenary Soldiers. For the raising the Horse, the Gentlemen of the Country are obliged by their Tenure, not only to serve in Person for the Defence of the Realm, but to maintain a certain number of Horse in continual readiness, especially in those parts next the Tartars, where their numbers are great, and with whom they many times joyn to afflict and harass their own Country.

CHAP. V.

The Religion of the Polanders.

THe ancient Inhabitants of the Country were *Idolaters*, and worſhiped the ſame Gods as the *Greeks*, the *Romans* and *Germans*. *Tertullian* aſſures us in his Treatiſe againſt the *Jews*, that the Goſpel was then preached in *Sarmatia*: But we know it was not received in that *Sarmatia*, which is now *Poland* till the 10th. Century. *Miciſlaus*, or *Misko* I. married *Debraw*, the Daughter of *Boleſlaus*, Duke of *Bohemia*; and was Baptized the 7th. of March in the Year 965. and 966. ſince that time the *Polanders* have always continued Chriſtians. *Lutheraniſm* and *Calviniſm* have been received among them, but have not not prevailed there as in other Countries. They came acquainted with them from *John Huſs*, and others in the 15th. Century, who came from *Bohemia* into this Country. *Gregory Paul Miniſter of Cracow*, preached *Arrianiſm* there about the Year 1566. but was driven thence by *Sigiſmond*, with *George Blandrata*, *Lelius Socinus*, *Valentinus Gentilis*, and ſome others. *Fauſtus Socinus*, who has given the name to the *Socinians*, came thither afterwards and left his Diſciples who are to be found there to this day. There are likewiſe ſome *Lutherans*, *Calviniſts* and *Anabaptiſts* to be found in other parts of *Lithuania*. They have among them alſo *Schiſmaticks*, *Greeks*, and many *Jews* that are in ſome credit for their Wealth. They enjoy ſome particular Priviledges, but you ſee them always intent upon their Profit and Uſury. They live miſerable without Eſtates in Land, and only enrich themſelves by Trade. The *Polanders* are zealous in their Religion, hear Maſs daily, and practice great Auſterities upon themſelves during Lent.

CHAP. VI.

A Relation of the Death of John Sobieski, *late King of* Poland : *With an Account of the Preſent Election, as it now ſtands.*

John Sobieski the late King of *Poland*, departed this Life the 17*th* of *June*, 1696. about nine a Clock at Night, leaving behind him his Queen and 3 Princes, (*viz.*) *James*, *Alexander* and *Conſtantine*, with a Princeſs who is married to the preſent Elector of *Bavaria*. In his life time he heaped up *vaſt* Riches, and Endeavoured to make the Crown Hereditary, but in vain.

The King being Dead, which was notifyed by Expreſs to the Cardinal *Radziowski* Arch-Biſhop of *Gneſna*, Primate of the Kingdom of *Poland*, and Regent during the *Inter-regnum*, he repaired immediately to the Capitol, and made his publick Entry into *Warſaw* on the 24*th* of *June*, 1696. with the uſual Ceremonies ; the firſt thing he did was to call together the Senators, Principal Miniſters and Biſhops, who met, and had Conference in his Preſence the 28 and 29*th* of *June*, 1696. and came to the following Reſolutions, (*viz.*) Firſt, To notify the Death of the King to the *Caſtelleins*, and that the grand Convocation for Electing a new King be fixed upon the 29*th* of *Auguſt*, 1696. Secondly, That notice be given to the Foreign Princes. Thirdly, That the Frontier Garriſons be reinforced, and the Troops maintained out of the publick Revenue. Fourthly, That the Treaſurer of the Crown do regulate the deceaſed Kings Court. Fifthly, The Cardinal Primate recommended to the Treaſurer of the Crown the ſafety of Trinity Fort, *&c.* And Sixthly, He ſincerely promiſed to preſerve the *Jura Patronatus Regia*.

The Cardinal Primate having thus taken the Government upon him (which of right belongs to his Eminence during the *Inter-regnum*) he has managed Affairs there ever ſince, much in favour of *France*, and againſt the Intereſt of the Houſe of *Auſtria*.

There were at firſt, ſeveral Illuſtrious Perſons propoſed as Candidates to fill the Throne, (*viz.*) Prince *James*, Prince *Alexander*, two of the late King Sons, the Elector of *Bavaria*, the Prince of *Vaudemont*, the Duke of *Lorrain*, the Grand Mareſchal of the Crown, Prince *Sapieha*, the Prince of *Newbourg*, the Prince of *Tranſilvania*, with the Prince of *Conti*, the Prince *Don Livio Odeſchalchi*, and the Prince of *Baden* the Elector of *Saxony*, not then being talked of.

There being ſo many Pretenders, the Kingdom fell into Faction, and he that had the moſt Money ſeemed to have the beſt Intereſt, in the meantime the Armies of *Poland* and *Lithuania* Confederated, and Committed abundance of Hoſtilities, doing a World of Miſchief, being ſupported under hand by the Abbot of *Polignac* Ambaſſador of *France*, with Money. This put the Kingdom into a Flame, and occaſioned the general Convocation to be put off from time to time; but at length the Crown generally prevailed with the Confederate Armies to ſubmit, having procured a round Sum of Money of the Queen *Dowager*, to be diſtributed amongſt them.

This being done, matters became Calm ; and the particular Diets were held, which terminated, but not without heats.

The general Diet was appointed, and the overture made on the 15*th* of *May*, 1697. with the accuſtomed Ceremony, firſt the Popes Nuncio ſolemniſed the Maſs of the holy Ghoſt. After which the Biſhop of *Poſcow* made a Sermon exhorting the Aſſembly to mind the intereſt of the republick, and lay aſide all private Advantages, and to Advance to the Throne whom they ſhould deem moſt Worthy. The

The firſt thing the Aſſembly did, was to make choice of a Speaker, but that took up a conſiderable time, becauſe all the Deputies were not at firſt came up, but in Concluſion the Sieur *Bilinski*, a Perſon of Polite Learning and Ability was Elected, but the lower Nobility being Jealous that he was in the intereſt of *France*, threatned to cut him in Pieces if he ſhould move the advancing a *French* Man to the Crown: However we find ſince that he did not in the leaſt promote the Intereſt of the Prince of *Conti*, which plainly Demonſtrates that he favoured the promoting of ſuch as ſhould be propoſed by the Emperor and his Allies. Note that this Election began the firſt of *June*, New Stile, and laſted till the 16*th* of the ſame Month before the Suffrages could be collected and told, this Affair which was only looked upon as a preliminary, took up a whole Month.

The next thing they were to do, was to give Audiences to the Foreign Miniſters, which they Commenced, on the 20th of *June*; *Siegnior Davia* the Popes Nuncio being firſt admitted, and next to him the Biſhop of *Paſſau*, the Emperors Extraordinary Ambaſſador, and the reſt in their turns.

The One and Twentieth of *June* being come, none could then Conjecture who ſhould be Elevated to the Crown, many of thoſe firſt propoſed, not being ſo much as mentioned.

Prince *Don Livio Odeſchalchi*, who had propoſed the moſt advantageous terms to the Republick, was alſo not thought fit to Sway the Crown: They wanting a Warlike Prince, whoſe Name was Terrible to the Infidels, to be King.

As for the Duke of *Lorrain*, there was two main Obſtacles that hindred them from making Choice of him: Firſt, his tender Age; and the ſecond, becauſe the Houſe of *Lorrain* having their Territories, could not Expend ſuch large Sums as was neceſſary for the purchaſing Suffrages.

And upon the whole, it was thought that the Party of the

the Prince of *Conti*, and that of the Prince of *Baden* was the ſtrongeſt; yet ſome were of Opinion, that the Party of Prince *James* did over-ballance that of the Prince of *Conti*: ſo that the *Poles* were afraid then of a double Election, unleſs they could pitch upon a Third Perſon to the ſatisfaction of both ſides; which was hardly to be done.

There was no Diſcourſe all this while of the Heroick Elector of *Saxony*; but he being arrived at *Dreſden*, which is his Capitol, the beginning of June, he muſtered his Troops, to the number of 10000 Men, and inſtead of going for *Hungary* to Command the Imperial Army, he marched with them to *Breſlau* in *Sileſia*, where he explained his deſign of ſtanding a Candidate for the Crown of *Poland*; which was an Amazement to moſt People, becauſe of his Religion, he being looked upon to have been a Proteſtant; but it ſoon appeared otherwiſe; for he had turned *Roman Catholick* at *Vienna* 18 Months before, which induced the Pope's Nuncio to ſpeak in his behalf at the Diet; ſo that then it was no Secret.

The Day of Election being come, which was the Twenty Sixth of June, they drew out into the Field, and being come to the Place appointed, the Biſhop of *Ploſcow*, and thoſe of his Palatine, flung up their Caps, and cried out, *Vivat Candeus*; but they were immediately ſurrounded, and threatned to be Cut in pieces with Cimitars, it not being their turn to ſpeak.

Conti's Party finding thus, that they were not ſtrong enough to Elect him, ſent to the French Ambaſſador to let him know, that if he would conſent to it, they would give their Suffrages to Elect any other, offering to return him the immenſe Sums which they had received of him, but he inſiſted to have the Prince of *Conti* Elected, according to his Inſtructions from his Maſter.

Whilſt

Whilſt theſe things were in Agitation, the Primate and the Biſhop *Ploſcow* Elected the Prince of *Conti*, and cauſed him to be proclaimed, and immediately retired out of the Field, and went to the Cathedral at *Warſaw*, where they Sung *Te Deum*.

Upon which the Favourers of the Houſe of *Auſtria*, finding that the Prince of *Conti* had but Fourteen Voices more than the Elector of *Saxony*, or Prince *James*, they reſolved to unite their Suffrages in favour of his Electoral Highneſs, by which means he had One and Twenty Voices more than *Conti*.

This raiſed up the drooping Spirits of thoſe that were in the Intereſt of the H. of *Auſtria* againſt that of *Bourbon*, to that degree, that they cauſed inſtantly the Biſh. of *Cujavia*, at the Head of that Party, to repair in all haſte to the Cathedral at *Warſaw*, where he entred with a Numerous Train; but finding the Doors ſhut by order of the Cardinal Primate, the Popes Nuncio cauſed them to be broke open; and Proclaimed *Frederick* Auguſt Elector of *Saxony*, King, with accuſtomed Ceremony, *Te Deum* was likewiſe Sung the ſame day.

The Elector's Party went into the Field the 27*th* and the 28*th*, but that of the Prince of *Conti* never appeared after the firſt day, ſo that his Party viſibly fell off daily, particularly the Senators; ſo that Two Hundred Forty Three Standards declared for his Electoral Highneſs, and but Thirty Four for *Conti*.

The Party of the Elector upon this drew up the Concordate which the King is to Sign, and agreed to ſend a formal Deputation to *Breſlau*, to invite the Elector to accept of the Crown.

The four Mareſchals have declared in his Favour alſo.

The Biſhop of *Cujavia* made a ſolemn Proteſtation againſt the unlawful Election of the Prince of *Conti*, without the gain-ſaying of any. The Royaliſts fired through the Windows

dows of the Cardinal Primate's Palace as they paſſed by, uttering many Contumacious words againſt his Eminence.

On the 4*th* of *July* the great Embaſſy, conſiſting of four Senators, accompanied by a great number of the Nobility and Gentry, went from *Warſaw* for *Breſlau* in *Sileſia*, to Congratulate the New King, and to Conduct him to *Crakau* to be Crowned.

On the 5*th* of *July* the Waywade of *Vilna*, the great Mareſchal of *Lithuania*, the Crown Treaſurer, and the Biſhop of *Ploſcow*, as Partiſans of the Prince of *Conti*, conferred with the Generals who are for the Elector of *Saxony*, in order to adjuſt matters, but to no purpoſe, the Adherents of *Conti* refuſing to deſert him, threatning the Republick with a War from *France*, though he ſhould be neceſſitated to make Peace with the Allies.

The Miniſter of *Saxony* having received a Million of Crowns, diſtributed ſome of it among the Army, which gained them intirely to the ſide of his Electoral Highneſs, and to promiſe to ſtand by him with their Lives and Fortunes; and in a word, they made Rejoycings upon his Elevation, and diſcharged all their Cannon Thrice, *&c.*

The Criticks make ſtrange Conjectures at the ſtriking of the Thunder-bolt in the Elector's Cloſet at *Dreſden*, and at the ſame time in his Houſe at *Vienna*; it being the very hour he was Elected King of *Poland*.

The Elector's Party have left no Stone unturned to bring over *Conti*'s Party; and as an Expedient they ſent for the Elector's Miniſter to the place of Election by above an Hundred Deputies, where he produced an Atteſtation that the Elector his Maſter was turned *Roman* Catholick, thanked them for their Election, telling them, that his Maſter, purſuant to his promiſe, would pay the Ten Millions of *Poliſh* Florins, that he would maintain Six Thouſand Men at his own Charge, *&c.* Upon which the Party of his Electoral High-

Highneſs, bound themſelves with an Aſſociation to ſtand by him, and not change their Minds.

I preſume it will not be amiſs, to inſert here the ſubſtance of a Letter, which the Cardinal Primate ſent the day after the Election to the Elector, wherein among other things he inſerts what follows, *viz.*

We thought not to diſpoſe of the Care of our Kingdom to your Electoral Highneſs, who is now taken up with Heroick Actions againſt the Common Enemy of Chriſtendom, for which reaſon we requeſt your Electoral Highneſs, not to accept of this nomination as unanimous, but according to your innate Generoſity, and out of Love to the neighbourhood, to let us remain in Peace with our free Election of our King De Conti. *If your Electoral Highneſs make any ground on the unity of the Generals, and the great Emulation between them and the Republick; you may be aſſured the more firmly, we have reſolved not to accept of the King by them propoſed,* &c.

The Expreſs diſpatched with this Letter, returned with it unopened, becauſe the Addreſs was to the Elector, and not King.

The Cardinal Primate has remonſtrated to all the Neighbouring Princes; that the Election of the Elector of *Saxony* to be King of *Poland* is void, it being contrary to the known Laws of the Land, but they take no Notice of it. But on the other hand the *Czar* of *Muſcovy* and others threaten the republick with a perpetual War; in caſe they ſhould Advance a *French* Man to the Throne.

The Elector of *Saxony* now King of *Poland* being gone from *Breſlau* to *Tarnowitz*; he had advice that the great *Embaſſy* of *Poland*, were approaching on the 21*ſt*, and on the 23*d* his Majeſty rendred himſelf without the Gate; where an Elevated place was Erected, covered with green Bows; and hung with Tapiſtry, and a Throne Erected under a Velvet Canopy richly Adorned. The King was very finely Dreſſed, his Cloaths being Decked with Diamonds; ſo that his Suit was ſaid to be worth a Million. The *Embaſſy* being arrived, they were Conducted to the King with the Sound of Trumpets and Kettle Drums. His Majeſty ſtood under the Canopy with the Biſhop of *Paſſau* on his Right Hand, and the Prince of *Furſtemburg* on his Left, one of the Prime Miniſters Conducted them to the Throne, where after a profound Reverence delivered their Credentials, which were read; after which the firſt Ambaſſador, being the Wayvode *Wylinski* for *Poland*, Commenced his Speech in Latin; and having Extolled the King's Perſon, and his great Qualities, he intimated the reaſons of their Arrival. The 2*d* Ambaſſador having the Wayvode of *Witegiski* for *Lithuania*, did the like; as did alſo the 3*d* Ambaſſador, who is the *Staroſt* of *Zydaizoiw*, in the Name of the Nobility. Then the King commanded the Baron *Fleming* to Anſwer them in Latin.

On the 27*th* the new King with the Court, and the *Embaſſy* broke up from *Tarnowitz* for the Frontiers of *Poland* in order to go to *Crakaw*, where he is to be Crowned the 15*th* of *September*: He is to be called *Auguſtus* the Second.

Since the new King is arrived at *Crakaw*, where he was received with the Loud Acclamations of the People; and he has Drawn together there upwards of 20000 Men, and is Diſpoſing all things for his Coronation, having ſworn to the *Pacta Conventa*.

Yet

Yet notwithſtanding, the Cardinal Primate does not deſiſt from promoting the intereſt of the Prince of *Conti*, having ſummoned the Nobility to meet the 26th. of *Auguſt*, pretending to proceed to a new Election, but it will ſignify nothing; the Elector of *Saxony* having already poſſeſſion, not only of the Kingdom, but alſo of the Crown; and on the other hand, the *Czar* of *Muſcovy* offers to aſſiſt him with 60000 Men to make good his pretentions, and the Elector of *Brandenburgh* with 16000. So that we may conclude, that this Election will terminate without the Effuſion of Blood in Favour of his Electoral Highneſs now King of *Poland*.

FINIS.